

QUASI-INVARIANT AND SUPER-COINVARIANT POLYNOMIALS FOR THE GENERALIZED SYMMETRIC GROUP

J.-C. AVAL

ABSTRACT. The aim of this work is to extend the study of super-coinvariant polynomials, introduced in [2, 3], to the case of the generalized symmetric group $G_{n,m}$, defined as the wreath product $C_m \wr \mathcal{S}_n$ of the symmetric group by the cyclic group. We define a quasi-symmetrizing action of $G_{n,m}$ on $\mathbb{Q}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, analogous to those defined in [12] in the case of \mathcal{S}_n . The polynomials invariant under this action are called quasi-invariant, and we define super-coinvariant polynomials as polynomials orthogonal, with respect to a given scalar product, to the quasi-invariant polynomials with no constant term. Our main result is the description of a Gröbner basis for the ideal generated by quasi-invariant polynomials, from which we deduce that the dimension of the space of super-coinvariant polynomials is equal to $m^n C_n$ where C_n is the n -th Catalan number.

RÉSUMÉ. Le but de ce travail est d'étendre l'étude des polynômes super-coinvariants (définis dans [2]), au cas du groupe symétrique généralisé $G_{n,m}$, défini comme le produit en couronne $C_m \wr \mathcal{S}_n$ du groupe symétrique par le groupe cyclique. Nous définissons ici une action quasi-symétrisante de $G_{n,m}$ sur $\mathbb{Q}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, analogue à celle définie dans [12] dans le cas de \mathcal{S}_n . Les polynômes invariants sous cette action sont dits quasi-invariants, et les polynômes super-coinvariants sont les polynômes orthogonaux aux polynômes quasi-invariants sans terme constant (pour un certain produit scalaire). Notre résultat principal est l'obtention d'une base de Gröbner pour l'idéal engendré par les polynômes quasi-invariants. Nous en déduisons alors que la dimension de l'espace des polynômes super-coinvariants est $m^n C_n$ où C_n est le n -ième nombre de Catalan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let X denote the alphabet in n variables (x_1, \dots, x_n) and $\mathbb{C}[X]$ denote the space of polynomials with complex coefficients in the alphabet X . Let $G_{n,m} = C_m \wr \mathcal{S}_n$ denote the wreath product of the symmetric group \mathcal{S}_n by the cyclic group C_m . This group is sometimes known as the *generalized symmetric group* (cf. [17]). It may be seen as the group of $n \times n$ matrices in which each row and each column has exactly one non-zero entry (pseudo-permutation matrices), and such that the non-zero entries are m -th roots of unity. The order of $G_{n,m}$ is $m^n n!$. When $m = 1$, $G_{n,m}$ reduces to the symmetric group \mathcal{S}_n , and when $m = 2$, $G_{n,m}$ is the hyperoctahedral group B_n , *i.e.* the group of signed permutations, which is the Weyl group of type B (see [14]

Date: February 2, 2008.

Research financed by EC's IHRP Programme, within the Research Training Network "Algebraic Combinatorics in Europe," grant HPRN-CT-2001-00272.

for example for further details). The group $G_{n,m}$ acts classically on $\mathbb{C}[X]$ by the rule

$$(1.1) \quad \forall g \in G_{n,m}, \quad \forall P \in \mathbb{C}[X], \quad g.P(X) = P(X.^t g),$$

where g is the transpose of the matrix g and X is considered as a row vector. Let

$$Inv_{n,m} = \{P \in \mathbb{C}[X] \mid \forall g \in G_{n,m}, \quad g.P = P\}$$

denote the set of $G_{n,m}$ -invariant polynomials. Let us denote by $Inv_{n,m}^+$ the set of such polynomials with no constant term. We consider the following scalar product on $\mathbb{C}[X]$:

$$(1.2) \quad \langle P, Q \rangle = P(\partial X)Q(X) \mid_{X=0}$$

where ∂X stands for $(\partial x_1, \dots, \partial x_n)$ and $X = 0$ stands for $x_1 = \dots = x_n = 0$. The space of $G_{n,m}$ -coinvariant polynomials is then defined by

$$\begin{aligned} Cov_{n,m} &= \{P \in \mathbb{C}[X] \mid \forall Q \in Inv_{n,m}, \quad Q(\partial X)P = 0\} \\ &= \langle Inv_{n,m}^+ \rangle^\perp \simeq \mathbb{C}[X] / \langle Inv_{n,m}^+ \rangle \end{aligned}$$

where $\langle S \rangle$ denotes the ideal generated by a subset S of $\mathbb{C}[X]$.

A classical result of Chevalley [6] states the following equality:

$$(1.3) \quad \dim Cov_{n,m} = |G_{n,m}| = m^n n!$$

which reduces when $m = 1$ to the theorem of Artin [1] that the dimension of the harmonic space $\mathbf{H}_n = Cov_{n,1}$ (cf. [9]) is $n!$.

Our aim is to give an analogous result in the case of quasi-symmetrizing action. The ring $Qsym$ of quasi-symmetric functions was introduced by Gessel [11] as a source of generating functions for P -partitions [18] and appears in more and more combinatorial contexts [5, 18, 19]. Malvenuto and Reutenauer [16] proved a graded Hopf duality between $QSym$ and the Solomon descent algebras and Gelfand *et. al.* [10] defined the graded Hopf algebra NC of non-commutative symmetric functions and identified it with the Solomon descent algebra.

In [2, 3], Aval *et. al.* investigated the space \mathbf{SH}_n of super-coinvariant polynomials for the symmetric group, defined as the orthogonal (with respect to (1.2)) of the ideal generated by quasi-symmetric polynomials with no constant term, and proved that its dimension as a vector space equals the n -th Catalan number:

$$(1.4) \quad \dim \mathbf{SH}_n = C_n = \frac{1}{n+1} \binom{2n}{n}.$$

Our main result is a generalization of the previous equation in the case of super-coinvariant polynomials for the group $G_{n,m}$.

In Section 2, we define and study a “quasi-symmetrizing” action of $G_{n,m}$ on $\mathbb{C}[X]$. We also introduce invariant polynomials under this action, which are called quasi-invariant, and polynomials orthogonal to quasi-invariant polynomials, which are called super-coinvariant. The Section 3 is devoted to the proof of our main result (Theorem 2.4), which gives the dimension of the space $SCov_{n,m}$ of super-coinvariant polynomials for $G_{n,m}$: we construct an explicit basis for $SCov_{n,m}$ from which we deduce its Hilbert series.

2. A QUASI-SYMMETRIZING ACTION OF $G_{n,m}$

We use vector notation for monomials. More precisely, for $\nu = (\nu_1, \dots, \nu_n) \in \mathbb{N}^n$, we denote X^ν the monomial

$$(2.1) \quad x_1^{\nu_1} x_2^{\nu_2} \cdots x_n^{\nu_n}.$$

For a polynomial $P \in \mathbb{Q}[X]$, we further denote $[X^\nu]P(X)$ as the coefficient of the monomial X^ν in $P(X)$.

Our first task is to define a quasi-symmetrizing action of the group $G_{n,m}$ on $\mathbb{C}[X]$, which reduces to the quasi-symmetrizing action of Hivert (*cf.* [12]) in the case $n = 1$. This is done as follows. Let $A \subset X$ be a subalphabet of X with l variables and $K = (k_1, \dots, k_l)$ be a vector of positive (> 0) integers. If B is a vector whose entries are distinct variables x_i multiplied by roots of unity, the vector $(B)_<$ is obtained by ordering the elements in B with respect to the variable order. Now the quasi-symmetrizing action of $g \in G_{n,m}$ is given by

$$(2.2) \quad g \bullet A^K = w(g)^{c(K)} (A \cdot |g|)_<^K$$

where $w(g)$ is the weight of g , *i.e.* the product of its non-zero entries, $|g|$ is the matrix obtained by taking the modules of the entries of g , and the coefficient $c(K)$ is defined as follows:

$$c(K) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \forall i, k_i \equiv 0 \pmod{m} \\ 1 & \text{if not.} \end{cases}$$

Example 2.1. If $m = 3$ and $n = 3$, and we denote by j the complex number $j = e^{\frac{2i\pi}{3}}$, then for example

$$\begin{aligned} & \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & j \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & j & 0 \end{pmatrix} \bullet (x_1^2 x_2) \\ &= (j^2)^1 \left[\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \cdot (x_1, x_2) \right]_{<}^{(2,1)} \\ &= j^2 (x_3, x_1)_{<}^{(2,1)} \\ &= j^2 (x_1, x_3)_{<}^{(2,1)} \\ &= j^2 x_1^2 x_3. \end{aligned}$$

It is clear that this defines an action of the generalized symmetric group $G_{n,m}$ on $\mathbb{C}[X]$, which reduces to Hivert's quasi-symmetrizing action (*cf.* [12], Proposition 3.4) in the case $m = 1$.

Let us now study its invariant and coinvariant polynomials. We need to recall some definitions.

A *composition* $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_k)$ of a positive integer d is an ordered list of positive integers (> 0) whose sum is d . For a *vector* $\nu \in \mathbb{N}^n$, let $c(\nu)$ represent the composition obtained by erasing zeros (if any) in ν . A polynomial $P \in \mathbb{Q}[X]$ is said

to be *quasi-symmetric* if and only if, for any ν and μ in \mathbb{N}^n , we have

$$[X^\nu]P(X) = [X^\mu]P(X)$$

whenever $c(\nu) = c(\mu)$. The space of quasi-symmetric polynomials in n variables is denoted by $QSym_n$.

The polynomials invariant under the action (2.2) of $G_{n,m}$ are said to be *quasi-invariant* and the space of quasi-invariant polynomials is denoted by $QInv_{n,m}$, i.e.

$$P \in QInv_{n,m} \Leftrightarrow \forall g \in G_{n,m}, g \bullet P = P.$$

Let us recall (cf. [12], Proposition 3.15) that $QInv_{n,1} = QSym_n$. The following proposition gives a characterization of $QInv_{n,m}$.

Proposition 2.2. *One has*

$$P \in QInv_{n,m} \Leftrightarrow \exists Q \in QSym_n / P(X) = Q(X^m)$$

where $Q(X^m) = Q(x_1^m, \dots, x_n^m)$.

Proof. Let P be an element of $QInv_{n,m}$. Let us denote by ζ the m -th root of unity $\zeta = e^{\frac{2i\pi}{m}}$ and by g_j the element of $G_{n,m}$ whose matrix is

$$\begin{pmatrix} \zeta & & 0 \\ & 1 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \\ & & & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

with the ζ in place j . Then we observe that the identities

$$\forall j = 1, \dots, n, \frac{1}{m}(P + g_j \bullet P + g_j^2 \bullet P + \dots + g_j^{m-1} \bullet P) = P$$

imply that every exponents appearing in P are multiples of m . Thus there exists a polynomial $Q \in \mathbb{C}[X]$ such that $P(X) = Q(X^m)$. To conclude, we note that $\mathcal{S}_n \subset G_{n,m}$ implies that P is quasi-symmetric, whence Q is also quasi-symmetric.

The reverse implication is obvious. \square

Let us now define *super-coinvariant* polynomials:

$$\begin{aligned} SCov_{n,m} &= \{P \in \mathbb{C}[X] / \forall Q \in QInv_{n,m}, Q(\partial X)P = 0\} \\ &= \langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle^\perp \simeq \mathbb{C}[X] / \langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle \end{aligned}$$

with the scalar product defined in (1.2). This is the natural analogous to Cov_n in the case of quasi-symmetrizing actions and $SCov_{n,m}$ reduces to the space of super-harmonic polynomials \mathbf{SH}_n (cf. [3]) when $m = 1$.

Remark 2.3. It is clear that any polynomial invariant under (2.2) is also invariant under (1.1), i.e. $Inv_{n,m} \subset QInv_{n,m}$. By taking the orthogonal, this implies that $SCov_{n,m} \subset Cov_{n,m}$. These observations somewhat justify the terminology.

Our main result is the following theorem which is a generalization of equality (1.4).

Theorem 2.4. *The dimension of the space $Scov_{n,m}$ is given by*

$$(2.3) \quad \dim SCov_{n,m} = m^n C_n = m^n \frac{1}{n+1} \binom{2n}{n}.$$

Remark 2.5. In the case of the hyperoctahedral group $B_n = G_{n,2}$, C.-O. Chow [7] defined a class $BQSym(x_0, X)$ of quasi-symmetric functions of type B in the alphabet (x_0, X) . His approach is quite different from ours. In particular, one has the equality:

$$BQSYm(x_0, X) = QSym(X) + QSym(x_0, X).$$

In the study of the coinvariant polynomials, it is not difficult to prove that the quotient $\mathbb{C}[x_0, X]/\langle BQSym^+ \rangle$ is isomorphic to the quotient $\mathbb{C}[X]/\langle QSym^+ \rangle$ studied in [3]. To see this, we observe that if \mathcal{G} is the Gröbner basis of $\langle QSym^+ \rangle$ constructed in [3] (see also the next section), then the set $\{x_0, \mathcal{G}\}$ is a Gröbner basis (any syzygy is reducible thanks to Buchberger's first criterion, *cf.* [8]).

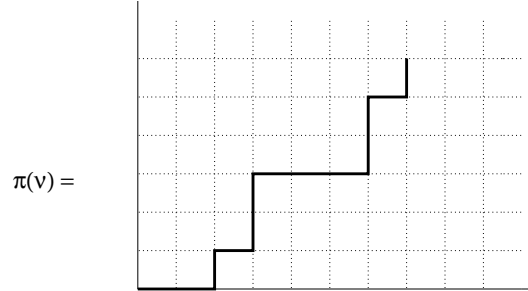
The next section is devoted to give a proof of Theorem 2.4 by constructing an explicit basis for the quotient $\mathbb{C}[X]/\langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle$.

3. PROOF OF THE MAIN THEOREM

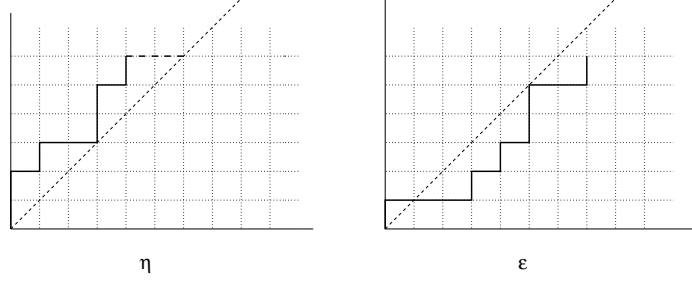
Our task is here to construct an explicit monomial basis for the quotient space $\mathbb{C}[X]/\langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle$. Let us first recall (*cf.* [3]) the following bijection which associates to any vector $\nu \in \mathbb{N}^n$ a path $\pi(\nu)$ in the $\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}$ plane with steps going north or east as follows. If $\nu = (\nu_1, \dots, \nu_n)$, the path $\pi(\nu)$ is

$$(0, 0) \rightarrow (\nu_1, 0) \rightarrow (\nu_1, 1) \rightarrow (\nu_1 + \nu_2, 1) \rightarrow (\nu_1 + \nu_2, 2) \rightarrow \dots \\ \rightarrow (\nu_1 + \dots + \nu_n, n-1) \rightarrow (\nu_1 + \dots + \nu_n, n).$$

For example the path associated to $\nu = (2, 1, 0, 3, 0, 1)$ is



We distinguish two kinds of paths, thus two kinds of vectors, with respect to their “behavior” regarding the diagonal $y = x$. If the path remains above the diagonal, we call it a *Dyck path*, and say that the corresponding vector is *Dyck*. If not, we say that the path (or equivalently the associated vector) is *transdiagonal*. For example $\eta = (0, 0, 1, 2, 0, 1)$ is Dyck and $\varepsilon = (0, 3, 1, 1, 0, 2)$ is transdiagonal.



We then have the following result which generalizes Theorem 4.1 of [3] and which clearly implies the Theorem 2.4.

Theorem 3.1. *The set of monomials*

$$\mathcal{B}_{n,m} = \{(X_n)^{m\eta+\alpha} / \pi(\eta) \text{ is a Dyck path, } 0 \leq \alpha_i < m\}$$

is a basis for the quotient $\mathbb{C}[X_n] / \langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle$.

To prove this result, the goal is here to construct a Gröbner basis for the ideal $\mathcal{J}_{n,m} = \langle QInv_{n,m}^+ \rangle$. We shall use results of [2, 3].

Recall that the *lexicographic order* on monomials is

$$(3.1) \quad X^\nu >_{\text{lex}} X^\mu \quad \text{iff} \quad \nu >_{\text{lex}} \mu,$$

if and only if the first non-zero part of the vector $\nu - \mu$ is positive.

For any subset \mathcal{S} of $\mathbb{Q}[X]$ and for any positive integer m , let us introduce $\mathcal{S}^m = \{P(X^m), P \in \mathcal{S}\}$. If we denote by $G(I)$ the unique reduced monic Gröbner basis (cf. [8]) of an ideal I , then the simple but crucial fact in our context is the following.

Proposition 3.2. *With the previous notations,*

$$(3.2) \quad G(\langle \mathcal{S}^m \rangle) = G(\langle \mathcal{S} \rangle)^m.$$

Proof. This is a direct consequence of Buchberger's criterion. Indeed, if for every pair $g, g' \in G(\langle \mathcal{S} \rangle)$, the syzygy

$$S(g, g')$$

reduces to zero, then the syzygy

$$S(g(X^m), g'(X^m))$$

also reduces to zero in $G(\langle \mathcal{S}^m \rangle)$ by exactly the same computation. \square

Let us recall that in [2] is constructed a family \mathcal{G} of polynomials G_ε indexed by transdiagonal vectors ε . This family is constructed by using recursive relations of the fundamental quasi-symmetric functions and one of its property (cf. [2]) says that the leading monomial of G_ε is: $LM(G_\varepsilon) = X^\varepsilon$. Since \mathcal{G} is a Gröbner basis of $\mathcal{J}_{n,1}$, the following result is a consequence of Propositions 2.2 and 3.2.

Proposition 3.3. *The set \mathcal{G}^m is a Gröbner basis of the ideal $\mathcal{J}_{n,m}$.*

To conclude the proof of Theorem 3.1, it is sufficient to observe that the monomials not divisible by a leading monomial of an element of \mathcal{G}^m , i.e. by a $X^{m\varepsilon}$ for ε transdiagonal, are precisely the monomials appearing in the set $\mathcal{B}_{n,m}$.

As a corollary of Theorem 3.1, one gets an explicit formula for the Hilbert series of $SCov_{n,m}$. For $k \in \mathbb{N}$, let $SCov_{n,m}^{(k)}$ denote the projection

$$(3.3) \quad SCov_{n,m}^{(k)} = SCov_{n,m} \cap \mathbb{Q}^{(k)}[X]$$

where $\mathbb{Q}^{(k)}[X]$ is the vector space of homogeneous polynomials of degree k together with zero.

Let us denote by $F_{n,m}(t)$ the Hilbert series of $SCov_{n,m}$, i.e.

$$(3.4) \quad F_{n,m}(t) = \sum_{k \geq 0} \dim SCov_{n,m}^{(k)} t^k.$$

Let us recall that in [3] is given an explicit formula for $F_{n,1}$:

$$(3.5) \quad F_{n,1}(t) = F_n(t) = \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} \frac{n-k}{n+k} \binom{n+k}{k} t^k$$

using the number of Dyck paths with a given number of factors (cf. [13]).

The Theorem 3.1 then implies the

Corollary 3.4. *With the notations of (3.5), the Hilbert series of $SCov_{n,m}$ is given by*

$$F_{n,m}(t) = \frac{1-t^m}{1-t} F_n(t^m)$$

from which one deduces the close formula

$$\sum_n F_{n,m}(t) x^n = \frac{(1-t) - \sqrt{(1-t)(1-t-4t^m x(1-t^m))} - 2x(1-t^m)}{(1-t)(2t^m-1) - x(1-t^m)}.$$

REFERENCES

- [1] E. ARTIN, *Galois Theory*, Notre Dame Mathematical Lecture **2** (1944), Notre Dame, IN.
- [2] J.-C. AVAL AND N. BERGERON, *Catalan Paths and Quasi-Symmetric Functions*, Proc. Amer. Math. Soc., to appear.
- [3] J.-C. AVAL, F. BERGERON AND N. BERGERON, *Ideals of Quasi-Symmetric Functions and Super-Coinvariant Polynomials for \mathcal{S}_n* , Adv. in Math., to appear.
- [4] F. BERGERON, A. GARSIA AND G. TESLER, *Multiple Left Regular Representations Generated by Alternants*, J. of Comb. Th., Series A, **91**, **1-2** (2000), 49–83.
- [5] N. BERGERON, S. MYKYTIUK, F. SOTTILE, AND S. VAN WILLIGENBURG, *Pieri Operations on Posets*, J. of Comb. Theory, Series A, **91** (2000), 84–110 .
- [6] C. CHEVALLEY, *Invariants of finite groups generated by reflections*, Amer. J. Math., **77** (1955), 778–782.
- [7] C.-O. CHOW, *Noncommutative Symmetric Functions of Type B*, Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001.
- [8] D. COX, J. LITTLE AND D. O'SHEA, *Ideals, Varieties, and Algorithms*, Springer-Verlag, New-York, 1992.
- [9] A. GARSIA, M. HAIMAN, *Orbit Harmonics and Graded Representations*, Éditions du Lacim, to appear.
- [10] I. GELFAND, D. KROB, A. LASCoux, B. LECLERC, V. RETAKH, AND J.-Y. THIBON, *Non-commutative symmetric functions*, Adv. in Math., **112** (1995), 218–348.

- [11] I. GESSEL, *Multipartite P -partitions and products of skew Schur functions*, in Combinatorics and Algebra (Boulder, Colo., 1983), C. Greene, ed., vol. 34 of Contemp. Math., AMS, 1984, pp. 289–317.
- [12] F. HIVERT, *Hecke algebras, difference operators, and quasi-symmetric functions*, Adv. in Math., **155** (2000), 181–238.
- [13] G. KREWERAS, *Sur les éventails de segments*, Cahiers du BURO, **15** (1970), 3–41.
- [14] G. LUSZTIG, *Irreducible representations of finite reflections groups*, Invent. Math., **43** (1977), 125–175.
- [15] I. MACDONALD, *Symmetric Functions and Hall Polynomials*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, second edition.
- [16] C. MALVENUTO AND C. REUTENAUER, *Duality between quasi-symmetric functions and the Solomon descent algebra*, Journal of Algebra, **177** (1995), 967–982.
- [17] M. OSIMA, *On the representations of the generalized symmetric group*, Math. J. Okayama Univ., **4** (1954), 39–56.
- [18] R. STANLEY, *Enumerative Combinatorics, Vol. 1*, Wadsworth and Brooks/Cole, 1986.
- [19] R. STANLEY, *Enumerative Combinatorics Vol. 2*, no. 62 in Cambridge Studies in Advanced Mathematics, Cambridge University Press, 1999. Appendix 1 by Sergey Fomin.

(Jean-Christophe Aval) LABRI, UNIVERSITÉ BORDEAUX 1, 351 COURS DE LA LIBÉRATION,
33405 TALENCE CEDEX, FRANCE

E-mail address: `aval@labri.fr`